

# Duplexes



## What are Duplexes?

In Durham’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), a duplex is a two-family dwelling in a single structure on a single lot. Individual units can be located on separate floors or side-by-side.



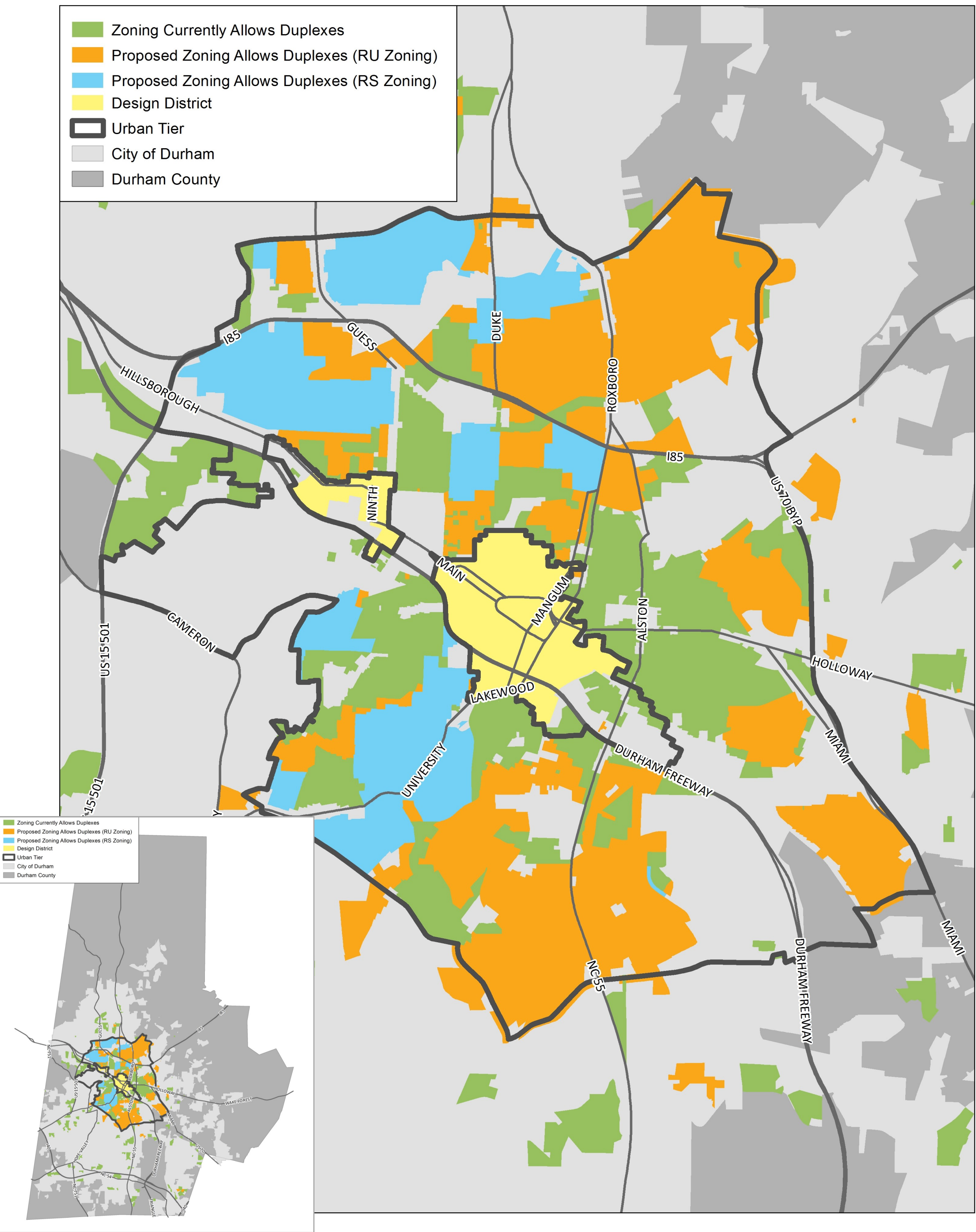
Duplexes can take many forms, and can sometimes be difficult to spot.

## Opportunities and Challenges

- Duplexes can offer a form of discreet, low-impact density that mimics the form and rhythm of existing neighborhoods
- Per-unit price of a duplex is often less than a one-unit, single-family house built on the same property
- Especially in the Urban Tier, duplexes can allow more people to take advantage of areas generally well-served by existing city and county services, including transit service
- Construction of new duplexes is limited to only 3% of land in the County
- Even in areas where new duplexes are allowed, few have been built, brining the financial feasibility of building a duplex over an equivalent size single-family house into question
- State law prohibits design standards for single and two-family housing, which could address many of the concerns raised about duplexes

## Where are Duplexes Allowed?

- Current Rule**
- New duplexes are allowed by right in the following zoning districts (depicted in **green** in the maps below): RU-5(2), RU-M, RC and RS-M
  - Design Districts allow for two-family units, but must meet all building type standards in Article 16 of the UDO, thus new, typical duplexes will not be found in these areas.
  - Certain planned zoning districts can also allow duplexes, but rezoning approvals for these districts by the governing body are required .
- Proposal**
- Allow duplexes by right in all RU-5 zoning districts in the Urban and Suburban Tiers (depicted in **orange** in the maps below)
  - Allow duplexes by right in all RS districts in the Urban Tier (depicted in **blue** in the maps below)
  - Allow duplexes within cluster or conservation subdivisions
- Rationale**
- Duplexes are currently allowed in approximately 6,200 acres. Expanding the zoning districts where duplexes are permitted doubles the area where they could be built to roughly 13,000 acres.
  - By right approvals reduce the time, expense, and complication of developing; UDO standards must still be met and all necessary building permits must be acquired.
  - Cluster and conservation subdivisions allow for smaller lots in trade for additional open space or conservation areas. Densities already prescribed for these types of subdivisions are not proposed for modification.



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## Development Standards

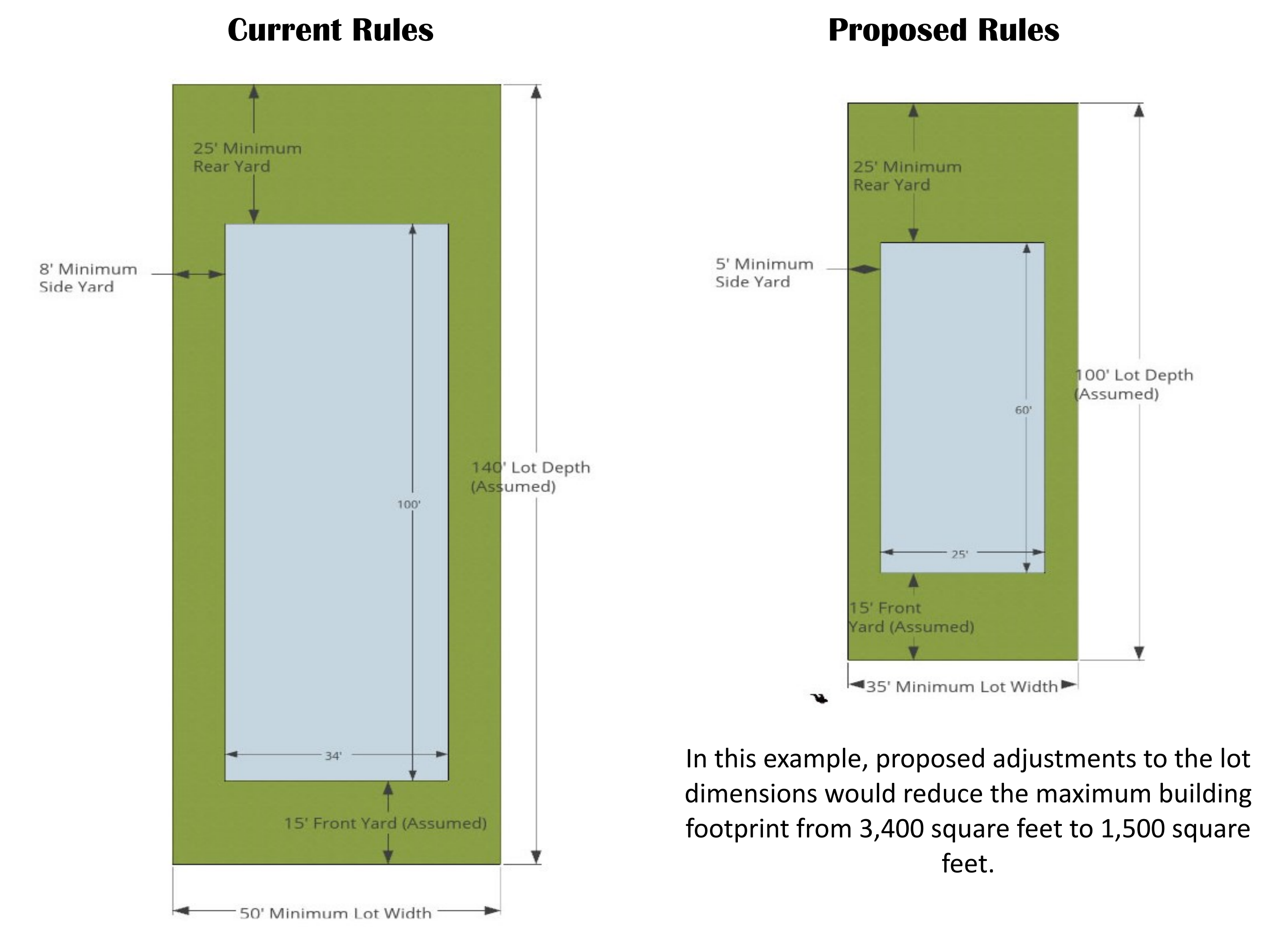
- Current Rule

- Duplexes are required to have larger lots and wider lot widths than single-family housing types (Urban Tier minimum lot area -7,000 square feet; minimum lot width - 50 feet)
  - The two units must be in one building
- Proposal

- Revise the dimensional standards ( lot area, width, yards) to be consistent with detached single-family houses (see below and the “Dimensions and Density” poster)
  - Allow each unit to be within separate structures, while maintaining same setback requirements.
- Rationale

- Requiring larger lots can lead to duplexes that “stand out” in a neighborhood context. Single-family and duplex structures thus generally follow the same rules.
  - Allowing the two units in one or two buildings allows for design flexibility while still maintaining setback requirements.
  - Expands the option to build smaller, possibly more affordable, duplexes

Example: Minimum Dimensional Standards and Maximum Building Footprint in the RU-5(2) District



Proposed Dimensional Standards (to be consistent with single-family standards)

	In Urban Tier Only				In Urban and Suburban Tiers			
	RS-20	RS-10	RS-8	RS-M	RU-5	RU-5(2)	RU-M	RC
Min. Site Area	20,000	8,000	5,000	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,000	3,500
Min. Lot Width	100	60	45	35	35	35	35	35
Min. Street Yard (collector or greater)	35	25	25	25	20	20	15	10
Min. Street Yard with Front Vehicular Access (from ROW)	35	25	25	20	20	20	15	10
Min. Street Yard with Rear Vehicular Access (from alley)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Min. Side Yard	12	10	9	6	6	6	6	6
Min. Rear Yard	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25